Some Considerations in Developing Effective Messaging

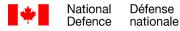*The SUCCESs Framework and Military Influence Activities*

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Some Considerations in Developing Effective Messaging

The "SUCCESs" Framework and Military Influence Activities

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Contractor's Document Number: Service-Level Agreement with RMC 2009-0302-SLA-PR10023
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Abstract

This Contract Report is intended to provide some applied methods to support the training of information operations (Info Ops) and psychological operations (PsyOps) personnel. It is meant to accompany a similarly titled presentation developed for the Peace Support Training Centre at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Kingston. While there are limitations to the framework suggested here, it can at least serve as a starting point for the improvement of training material provided students at CF schools. This field emphasizes messaging and how messages target audiences to remember a product, and act upon that memory in a desirable fashion. Although this approach does not pretend to solve all of the theoretical weaknesses in current Influence Activities (IA) related doctrine and training, it does provide a departure point for improving messaging in this area. The consumer psychology literature is both broad and well-established. It should be noted that the fundamentals of the framework are not entirely original. In fact, much of the material reflects previous longstanding work in other fields of research, including the voluminous body of literature on propaganda. However, the simplicity of the framework described below is ideally suited to the short instructional timeframes available in current CF training courses. This Contract Report will explore a newly proposed framework for effective messaging in consumer psychology, adapt it to be suitable to an IA perspective, and apply it through the use of examples drawn from operational experiences in Afghanistan and Bosnia.

Résumé

Le présent rapport de contrat vise à fournir quelques méthodes appliquées pour appuyer la formation du personnel des opérations d'information (OI) et des opérations psychologiques (OPSPSY) et à accompagner une présentation du même titre qui a été créée pour le Centre de formation pour le soutien de la paix de la base des Forces canadiennes (BFC) de Kingston. Bien que le cadre de travail suggéré soit limité, il peut au moins servir de point de départ pour améliorer les documents de formation distribués aux stagiaires dans les écoles des FC. Ce domaine de recherche met l'accent sur les messages et la façon dont ils ciblent des auditoires pour qu'ils se souviennent d'un produit et dont ils agissent sur cette mémoire de la façon voulue. Bien que cette approche ne prétend pas résoudre toutes les lacunes théoriques de la doctrine et de la formation actuelles sur les activités d'influence (AI), elle offre un point de départ pour améliorer les messages dans ce domaine. La documentation sur la psychologie du consommateur est à la fois vaste et bien établie. Il faut prendre note que les fondements du cadre de travail ne sont pas tout à fait originaux. En effet, la plus grande partie du document tient compte d'anciens travaux effectués dans d'autres domaines de recherche, y compris la documentation importante sur la propagande. Toutefois, la simplicité du cadre de travail décrit ci-dessous convient parfaitement aux périodes d'enseignement très courtes des cours de formation actuels des FC. Le présent document explorera un nouveau cadre de travail proposé pour l'envoi de messages efficaces en psychologie du consommateur, l'adaptera afin qu'il corresponde à la perspective des AI et l'appliquera de façon pratique à travers des exemples tirés d'expériences opérationnelles en Afghanistan et en Bosnie.

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Executive summary

Some Considerations in Developing Effective Messaging: The "SUCCESs" Framework and Military Influence Activities

The Canadian Army published updated Information Operations (Info Ops) doctrine in the 2008 edition of the Land Operations manual. This manual, in accord with then-current NATO and ABCA Armies Group thinking on the subject, broke Info Ops down into three activity category areas: Counter Command Activities, Information Protection Activities, and Influence Activities (IA). This division of activities was required to partially address the confusing nature of original Info Ops doctrine which had proven largely unusable by operationally deployed CF personnel. Influence Activities are currently defined as "an activity designed to affect the character or behaviour of a person or a group as a first order effect." The IA category includes the capabilities of Psychological Operations (PsyOps), Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), and Public Affairs (PA) and the enablers of Military Deception, Presence, Posture, and Profile (PPP), and Key Leader Engagement (KLE). While the revised doctrine greatly simplified and brought some much-required clarity to the doctrinal construct of Info Ops, it and related training materials continue to lack scientifically based foundational theory or applied methods material. What this means is that current doctrine is sufficient for instructing military personnel on how to perform their functions as part of a unit or staff but provide little to no information on what is required to affect change in human behaviour.

This Contract Report is intended to provide some applied methods to support the training of Info Ops and PsyOps personnel. It was developed to accompany a similarly titled presentation created for the Peace Support Training Centre at CFB Kingston. While there are limitations to the framework suggested here, it can at least serve as a starting point for the improvement of training material provided students at CF schools. The material presented below is drawn from the field of consumer psychology. This field emphasizes messaging and how messages target audiences to remember a product, and act upon that memory in a desirable fashion. The consumer psychology literature is both broad and well-established. It should be noted that the fundamentals of the framework are not entirely original. The simplicity of the framework described below is ideally suited to the short instructional timeframes available in current CF training courses. This Contract Report will explore a newly proposed framework for effective messaging in consumer psychology, adapt it to be suitable to an IA perspective, and apply it through the use of examples drawn from operational experiences in Afghanistan and Bosnia.

This Contract Report was developed as part of DRDC CORA Applied Research Project 12qr which is focused on developing research material to help improve the CF Influence Activity capability set.

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Some Considerations in Developing Effective Messaging: The "SUCCESs" Framework and Military Influence Activities

Sullivan, Andrew; DRDC CORA CR 2011-004; R & D pour la défense Canada – CORA; Janvier 2011.

L'Armée canadienne a publié la doctrine des opérations d'information (OI) dans l'édition 2008 du manuel des Opérations terrestres. Ce manuel, conformément aux directives d'alors d'un groupe de l'OTAN et des armées ABCA (Amérique, Grande-Bretagne, Canada, Australie) qui s'est penché sur la question, répartissait les opérations d'information en trois catégories d'activités : les activités de contre commandement, les activités de protection de l'information, et les activités d'influence (AI). Il était nécessaire de diviser ces activités pour résoudre en partie la nature confuse de la doctrine originale des opérations d'information qui s'était révélée en grande partie inutilisable par le personnel des FC déployé sur le terrain. Les activités d'influence sont actuellement définies comme « des activités conçues pour influer sur le caractère ou le comportement d'une personne ou d'un groupe comme effet de premier ordre ». La catégorie des AI inclut les capacités des opérations psychologiques (OPSPSY), de la coopération civile-militaire (CIMIC), et des Affaires publiques (AP) et les outils de déception militaire, de présence, de posture et de profil (PPP) et d'engagement des principaux dirigeants. Bien que la doctrine révisée simplifie et clarifie énormément le fondement doctrinal des opérations d'information, cette doctrine et les documents de formation connexes manquent toujours d'une théorie sous-jacente et scientifique ou de méthodes appliquées. Cela signifie que la doctrine actuelle suffit pour enseigner au personnel militaire la façon de remplir ses fonctions dans le cadre d'une unité ou d'une équipe, mais qu'elle fournit très peu d'information sur ce qui est nécessaire pour amener des changements dans le comportement humain.

Ce court document vise à fournir quelques méthodes appliquées pour appuyer la formation du personnel des opérations d'information (OI) et des opérations psychologiques (OPSPSY), et il a été conçu pour accompagner une présentation du même titre qui a été créée pour le Centre de formation pour le soutien de la paix de la base des Forces canadiennes (BFC) de Kingston. Bien que le cadre de travail suggéré soit limité, il peut au moins servir de point de départ pour améliorer les documents de formation distribués aux stagiaires dans les écoles des FC. Le document présenté ci-dessous s'inspire du domaine de la psychologie du consommateur qui met l'accent sur les messages et la façon dont ils ciblent des auditoires pour qu'ils se souviennent d'un produit et dont ils agissent sur cette mémoire de la façon voulue. La documentation sur la psychologie des consommateurs est à la fois vaste et bien établie. Il faut prendre note que les fondements du cadre de travail ne sont pas tout à fait originaux. La simplicité du cadre de travail décrit ci-dessous convient parfaitement aux périodes d'enseignement très courtes des cours de formation actuels des FC. Le présent document explorera un nouveau cadre de travail proposé pour l'envoi de messages efficaces en psychologie du consommateur, l'adaptera afin qu'il corresponde à la perspective des AI et l'appliquera de façon pratique à travers des exemples tirés d'expériences opérationnelles en Afghanistan et en Bosnie.

Ce document a été créé dans le cadre du Projet de recherche appliquée 12qr du Centre d'analyse et de recherche opérationnelle de Recherche et développement pour la défense Canada (RDDC

CARO), qui porte sur la création d'un document de recherche visant à augmenter l'ensemble de capacités des activités d'influence des FC.

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1   Introduction

The Canadian Army published updated Information Operations (Info Ops) doctrine in the 2008 edition of the Land Operations manual.[1] This manual, in accord with then-current NATO and ABCA Armies Group thinking on the subject, broke Info Ops down into three activity category areas: Counter Command Activities, Information Protection Activities, and Influence Activities (IA). This division of activities was required to partially address the confusing nature of original Info Ops doctrine which had proven largely unusable by operationally deployed CF personnel. Influence Activities are currently defined as "an activity designed to affect the character or behaviour of a person or a group as a first order effect."[2] The IA category includes the capabilities of Psychological Operations (PsyOps), Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), and Public Affairs (PA) and the enablers of Military Deception, Presence, Posture, and Profile (PPP), and Key Leader Engagement (KLE). While the revised doctrine greatly simplified and brought some much-required clarity to the doctrinal construct of Info Ops, it "lacks foundational theory and methods."[3] What this means is that current doctrine is sufficient for instructing military personnel on how to perform their functions as part of a unit or staff but provide little to no information on what is required to affect change in human behaviour. This holds true whether one considers current Info Ops / IA doctrine, NATO or CF capability-specific doctrine such as that for PsyOps, or the training materials used by the CF.[4] Some may argue that doctrine is not the appropriate place for detailed theoretical or applied material. However, the fact nonetheless remains that the training schedules for PsyOps and Info Ops courses at schools such as the Peace Support Training Centre at CFB Kingston are structured to provide overviews of existing doctrine and planning processes rather than to provide theoretical or applied instruction on the influence of human audiences.[5]

This Contract Report is intended to provide some applied methods to support the training of Info Ops and PsyOps personnel. While there are limitations to the framework suggested here, it can at least serve as a starting point for the improvement of training material provided students at CF schools. The material presented below is drawn from the field of consumer psychology. Not to be confused with the field of marketing, which is more focused on the actual sale of products, this field emphasizes messaging and how messages target audiences to remember a product, and act upon that memory in a desirable fashion. Although this approach does not pretend to solve all of the theoretical weaknesses in IA, it does provide a sound departure point for improving messaging in this area. The consumer psychology literature is both broad and well-established,

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[1] Canada, Department of National Defence, *Land Operations* B-GL-300-001/FP-001, 1 January 2008. See Chapter 5, Section 9.

[2] Defence Terminology Bank, entry record #33849, 8 August 2007. See also Canada, Department of National Defence, *Counter-Insurgency Operations* B-GL-323-004/FP-003, 13 December 2008, p.8-1.

[3] Neil Chuka, "Future CF Influence Activities Capabilities," DRDC CORA Letter Report 2010-209 (Ottawa: Defence R&D Canada, Centre for Operational Research and Analysis, 7 October 2010), p.4.

[4] See Leandre Fabrigar and Ronald Porter, "Evaluating the Psychology in Psychological Operations: An Assessment of the State of Psychological Knowledge in Canadian Forces PsyOps Training," Technical Report 2008-01 (Kingston: Royal Military College of Canada, March 2008).

[5] This should not be construed as a criticism of the staff of such schools but rather of the training system as a whole, which institutionally regards the training requirements for a capability such as PsyOps as little different than that of any other skill set despite the obvious challenges involved in attempting to influence the behaviour of humans.

and the theories have been used in practice across cultures for many years, by businesses and corporations. It should be noted that the fundamentals of the framework are not entirely original. In fact, much of the material reflects previous longstanding work in other fields of research, including the voluminous body of literature on propaganda.[6] However, the simplicity of the framework described below is ideally suited to the short instructional timeframes available in current CF training courses. This Contract Report will explore a newly proposed framework for effective messaging in consumer psychology, adapt it to be suitable to an IA perspective, and apply it through the use of examples drawn from operational experiences in Afghanistan and Bosnia.

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[6] It would be impossible to fully articulate the similarities in the constrained space available in this paper. However, those interested should review some of the key works in the field of propaganda studies which include: Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: the Formation of Men's Attitudes* (New York: Vintage, 1973 [1968, 1965]); Leonard Doob, *Propaganda: Its Psychology and Technique* (New York: Henry Holt, 1935); Terence Qualter, *Propaganda and Psychological Warfare* (New York: Random House, 1962); Anthony Pratkanis and Elliot Aronson, *Age of Propaganda: the Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion*, rev. ed. (New York: Henry Holt, 2002); Philip Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003). For those looking for a quicker overview, Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell provide a concise summation of the various approaches of most of these authors in their book *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2006).

DRDC CORA CR 2011-004

2 The SUCCESs Framework

In 2007, researchers Chip and Dan Heath completed a thorough review of the available consumer psychology literature to answer the question, what is the nature of ideas that "stick" in a person's mind, while others are forgotten? Their book *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*[7] provides a concise framework for creating messages that remain in the conscious mind of an audience, long after the original message has been received. As comprehensive as their volume is, caution should be exercised when any attempt is made to apply research from the field of marketing directly to military operations. The emergence of modern Influence Activities has seen some attempts by practitioners and instructors in the marketing field claiming to be able to 'sell' ideas in the difficult context of military IA[8]. Although there is some application from one field to the other, creating effective influence operations is not akin to selling toothpaste, and claims to the contrary should be viewed with a critical eye.[9] Fortunately, Heath and Heath's framework is not about selling products, it is a study of the nature of ideas, and as such it crosses disciplines with relative ease.

Their framework can be summarized as the acronym "SUCCESs." While trite, this pneumonic stands for the six elements necessary to maximize the "stickiness"[10] of an idea. Truly sticky ideas must be *Simple*, have an element that is *Unexpected*, be *Concrete* in their terms, be *Credible* in their source, have an *Emotional* aspect, and be presented in the form of a *Story*. As the stickiness of an idea is not an either/or proposition, the relative use of each of these factors may vary. For example, presenting an idea in the form of a story may enhance the likelihood of it being remembered by the audience, failing to present the idea as a story does not mean the idea will be immediately forgotten. Variances such as these make applying the SUCCESs framework more of an art than a science. Therefore, as simple as the SUCCESs model may appear to be, there are latent implications of each component that must be considered.

2.1 SUCCESs: Simple

"Simple" can be something of a misnomer. Heath and Heath go to great lengths to explain what they mean by a "simple" message. To simplify a message is not to "dumb it down" for an

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[7] Chip Heath and Dan Heath, *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* (New York: Random House, 2007).

[8] This author first noticed this emerging trend in several presentations at the IOIA Symposium held at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom/Cranfield University on 3 March 2010. Due to the Chatham House rule, specific presenters and papers cannot be named.

[9] This is not to say that there are not some similarities. As the authors of one study investigating whether commercial marketing theory and practices can be used to inform military operations have stated: "Despite considerable differences between military operational venues and the commercial marketplace, a common thread exists, one that allows the weaving of insights from one into new shaping approaches and opportunities in the other." See Todd Helmus, C. Paul, and R. Glenn, *Enlisting Madison Avenue: the Marketing Approach to Earning popular Support in Theatres of Operation* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2007), p.57.

[10] To illustrate the comprehensiveness of Heath and Heath's work, they cite Malcolm Gladwell as the originator of the notion that an idea can be 'sticky'. Gladwell's own work should be considered for its insights into how ideas spread to become social movements. See Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (New York: Little, Brown, 2000).

audience; this will inevitably lead to a change in the intent of the message where the idea received by the audience is not the idea which the messenger intended to send. Rather, simplifying a message means to get to the *core of the idea*[11]; what can be referred to as the "commander's intent." By analogy, the difference is akin to a military commander providing a detailed, step-by-step plan of an assault to his troops, versus a commander who provides his troops with the intent of the assault, and leaves it to his soldiers to achieve the objective. This latter strategy is infinitely more flexible and robust than the former option.[12] As messages are naturally passed from one host to another, the details of the message will change and evolve. Where the structure of the message is rigid, the intent of the message can be lost. Where the intent is rigid but the details are fluid, the message stands a better chance of surviving and being retransmitted. To obtain the core intent of your message, Heath and Heath recommend that you should not "look for what you can add to an idea to make it better; look for what you can take away from an idea before it loses its meaning."[13]

Critical to maintaining the core message is recognizing that every subsequent message or action should reflect, support, and not violate, this core idea[14]. A common misstep in passing messages is to begin with an attention-grabbing idea that is unrelated to the core idea. Intuitively, it would seem that generating such attention would be an advantage, but in fact, it will likely detract from the audience's willingness or ability to receive the core idea; "Instead, work to make the core message itself more interesting"[15].

The best examples of simple, core ideas that stick in a target's mind, and contain powerful messages, are fables and other proverbs. Proverbs are compact sound bites which contain a huge inherent message, and are applicable in many diverse situations. In communities where strong central government control is absent, proverbs are used to teach appropriate behaviour in the socialization of children. As Heath and Heath argue, "Proverbs are helpful in guiding individual decisions in environments with shared standards. Those shared standards are often ethical or moral norms. Proverbs offer rules of thumb for the behaviour of individuals."[16] Proverbs also exist cross-culturally. This is advantageous because it avoids the dangers of ethnocentrism, and the inherent difficulty in agents of one culture trying to understand and create messages for an audience of another culture.

Examples of Afghan proverbs include[17]:

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[11] Heath and Heath, *Made*, pp. 27-28.

[12] Why should flexibility matter in messaging? Advertisers who specialize in creating viral marketing campaigns, which use nearly identical techniques as those employed for IA, know that once a message has been launched, it cannot be controlled. Efforts to control or direct the campaign as it evolves imposes a change in the nature of the audience and the message in a similar way that anthropologists cannot be participant observers without impacting their subjects. Since a message will naturally evolve, and it cannot be controlled, a message that is both robust and flexible will have a longer life, than a more rigidly structured idea whose intent may be lost when the details evolve.

[13] Heath and Heath, *Made*, p. 28.

[14] Ibid., pp. 28-30.

[15] Ibid., p. 41.

[16] Ibid., 47-48.

[17] Special thanks to Colonel Charles Hamel for his assistance in providing these examples from his experiences in theatre.

- "Vinegar that is free, is sweeter than honey." (Meaning: People love getting something for free.)

- "Two watermelons can't be held in one hand." (Meaning: If you have too many preoccupations, you will succeed at none of them. This is very similar to "One in the hand is worth two in the bush".)

- "A porcupine speaking to its baby says, 'O my child of velvet.'" (Meaning: One's own child is especially dear for him/her.)

- "A river is not contaminated by having a dog drink from it." (Meaning: One of good character is pure despite criticism)

While it may be difficult to work certain proverbs into messages that are applicable to IA objectives, in other cases, the general, pro-social nature of some proverbs makes them easy and desirable ideas to insert as part of a *non-specific* messaging campaign.[18] The ISAF produced *Sada-e Azadi* paper contains a regular feature of a parable, with a proverb as the moral. This moral is presented at the end of the story and represents the central, simple, idea at the core of the story. Consider the following example:

> A man was looking for something he had lost one day in his house when he heard a very faint voice coming from the corner of a storeroom. "Please help!" cried the tiny, high-pitched voice. The man looked into the corner and found a spider web. In the middle of the web was a brown spider. Struggling nearby was a winged insect, clearly trapped by the crafty eight-legged spider. "Please help! There's not much time!" the tiny voice cried again. "I will surely die if you do not kill this vicious creature that is threatening to kill me and eat me". Intrigued by the idea of a talking insect, the man asked: "What will you do for me if I help you?" "Anything!" The voice cried out. "I will be your slave for the rest of my life. Whatever is in my power shall be yours for the asking."
> The man thought how he could take the insect around the country, and people would pay to see something so strange as a talking bug.
> So he said: "I will help you." And with that, he took his shoe and smashed the spider in the middle of the web. "So you are saved," he said to the still-struggling insect in the web. "What do you say about that?" But there was only silence. He took the insect and showed it to a scientist, who explained that it was a spider-eating wasp. The voice calling for help belonged to the spider he had killed.
> (Meaning: Know all the facts before you take action)[19]

Not only does this example demonstrate a *Simple*, pro-social idea, but the action called for by this message is applicable to ISAF goals more specifically. The core idea promotes critical thinking and recognition of the need to avoid jumping to conclusions. This action is beneficial in promoting local nationals to seek out alternative explanations and conclusions to those solely provided by the enemy, rather than simply accepting the first message they are exposed

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[18] A non-specific messaging campaign refers to a campaign that is directed at the population as a whole, rather than a particular target sub-group. These campaigns are also not directed at influencing a specific behaviour, attitude, or belief, but promote pro-social behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs in general.
[19] Unattributed, "The Man and the Bug," *Sada-e Azadi*, No. 191, p. 8.

to. Furthermore, this parable is useful to IA practitioners on two fronts. First, it demonstrates the use of proverbs in disseminating a simple message. Second, it illustrates how the idea contained in a lengthy, detailed story can be reduced to a *Simple* core idea. It is important to remember that even where the content of a proverb is inapplicable, still consider the concise structure of it when constructing your messages.

2.2   SUCCESSs: Unexpected

Previously it was argued that using surprising or interesting gimmicks to seize the target's attention had significant potential drawbacks. This is true when the gimmick is unrelated to the core idea and thereby provides a distraction from the intent of the message. Conversely, when the core idea can be presented in a way that violates the audience's preconceived notions of how an idea should be presented, what an information offering should contain, or what the implications of that idea are, then the idea can achieve a greater focus. This is what Heath and Heath refer to as "breaking a pattern."[20] Breaking patterns is necessary because people possess automatic cognitive replies to expected patterns of stimuli. In the case of IA, an automatic response can prevent the message from being received and cognitively processed. When an automatic response is initiated, it occurs *in the place of* a response derived from critical thinking. In short, using the *Unexpected* bypasses the automatic response and forces the mind to consider the stimuli, which increases the likelihood that the stimuli/message will be received. When advertising a product, employing the *Unexpected* may involve using humour to break the repetitive pattern of extolling the virtues of the product;[21] for films, a teaser trailer may be used to leave the audience curious and wanting to know more about the movie; and in IA presenting an idea as a reflection of cultural values from a distinct perspective may be a valuable tool to break the pattern of expectations Afghans have about messaging.

For example, it would be quite *expected* for an IA operation to try to influence an audience to provide information on the enemy. There is an obvious element of self-interest in these sorts of appeals, and that ulterior motive is expected by the audience. However, it would be quite *Unexpected* if the appeal contained an obvious element of self-interest on the part of the audience. Counterinsurgency expert Dr David Kilcullen concurs in that "winning hearts and minds is not a matter of making local people *like* you…but of getting them to accept that supporting your side is in their interest."[22] Take a Public Service Announcement (PSA) aired in Afghanistan by Radio RANA:

> The enemies of peace have become desperate. It seems they will try just about anything. Recently enemies of peace have disguised themselves in burkas to attack our security forces. Of course the attack is on their victims, but there is another victim here. This is also an attack on women. When enemies of peace disguise themselves as women in an act of violence, part of the innocence of women is lost. A woman is someone's daughter. Someone's wife. A woman is a bearer of children. A friend. A woman is not a weapon. If

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[20] Heath and Heath, *Made*, p. 64.

[21] Consider the highly successful ad campaign for Old Spice bodywash for men, with the "Man your man could smell like" character. See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owGykVbfgUE.

[22] George Packer, "Knowing the Enemy: Can Social Scientists Redefine the 'War on Terror'?" *The New Yorker*, 18 December 2006, p. 63. Italics in original.

you encounter any enemies of peace alert security forces, go to your district centre, or call 0700377591. Your identity will be kept secret[23].

This carefully constructed message overtly reveals the self-interested, "ulterior motive" of the military in the phrase "Of course the attack is on [the security forces]," yet switches to the *Unexpected* by juxtaposing that phrase with the second half of the same sentence: "but there is another victim here." It then cleverly attaches the unexpected element to a core value held by Afghan men—protection of their women. It is *Unexpected* for the audience to think that the protection of security forces and the protection of their women are so closely interrelated. The core cultural value of protecting one's family brings with it an appeal to a powerful emotional response, the obligation of upholding such values.[24] The sudden connection made between the objective of the message, to report any actions by the "enemies of peace" to security forces, and the self-interest of the audience violates the expected pattern and any automatic responses to that pattern. To reject this message, it must be critically evaluated, and it can only be evaluated if it is actively received.

To achieve the level of unexpectedness found in the RANA message, intelligence must be gathered on what expectations are held by that audience. To apply this intelligence, shift your approach in messaging from 'what information do I want to impart' to "what questions do I want my audience to ask?"[25] In the RANA message, the IA messenger wants the audience to ask "Why should I report the actions of the enemies of peace to the security forces?" Establishing the connection between the safety of the security forces and the audience member's own relatives answers that question. Being able to effectively frame messages to build *Unexpected* links is one more way to use the intelligence gathered by Target Audience Analyses (TAAs) and Human Terrain Teams (HTTs) to create better messaging.

2.3   SUCCESs: Concrete

Simple ideas with unexpected twists are useful means for encouraging a target audience to hear a message and remember it; however, the message must be *understood* to retain its original intent. Ideas that are abstract, or contain an element that is foreign to the audience will be disregarded, regardless of how simple or unexpected the message may be. For example, the signs posted on the rear vehicles in NATO convoys warn its audience to stay back 150 meters. This is a simple message, with the unexpected element of staying back "150 meters." Unfortunately, in this case the unexpected element is that the audience likely does not know what a "meter" is, let alone 150 of them. This message has not been grounded in a concrete reality which can be understood by the intended audience. Such a reality can only happen when the elements of the message can be remembered or experienced by the audience through their five senses. Whereas one "meter" is an abstract, an equivalent concept of length, perhaps one used by Afghans in their local market to measure cloth for sale, would be the same intended message with a concrete grounding.

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[23] All Radio RANA examples are courtesy of the Canadian Forces, Department of National Defence, Ottawa.
[24] This example will be seen again in a subsequent section.
[25] Heath and Heath, *Made,* p. 88.

Conversely, ISAF's Radio RANA has developed a thoughtful PSA to remind people to use their lights when engaging in roadside vehicle repairs at night. The goal of the message is to inform the audience that security forces may mistake simple repairs for the planting of an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), or other enemy activity. To avoid a reaction from security forces, illuminate your activity.

> It's night time. You're driving home, when all of a sudden you get a flat tire. Of course you have to change it, but at night time it might look like you're doing something suspicious. Fortunately there's a simple solution...(match sound). Turn on the light. Changing the tire in the dark could be mistaken for suspicious activity. Security forces might think you are a criminal that's hiding from them, but turning on the lights...(match sound)...will show them you're not being suspicious at all. Make sure you leave the headlights on, and carry a lantern or flashlight in your car at all times. The next time you're stuck in the dark, be safe...(match sound)...and turn on the light.

This message is particularly astute in that the sound effect is the striking of a match. It was observed that few Afghans have electricity, so the sound effect of a light switch being flicked on would be unrecognizable. It would be an abstract sound, ungrounded in the experiences of their five senses. Even though a match is not used to light headlights on a car, its association with illumination allows the audience to make the connection between the intent of the message and the concrete experience of their reality.

2.4   SUCCESs: Credible

When constructing messages based on the SUCCESs framework, two factors must remain forefront in our planning. First, the framework is not a rigid checklist. The research cited here indicates that a message that contains elements of all six criteria will be more likely to remain in the conscious mind of the target, than would a message with only two or three of these criteria. However, not all messages useful in an IA context will be appropriate to each of these elements. For example, in a proximate message relating to an ISAF/NATO operation to push the Taliban out of a specific area, it may be unnecessary to structure the message as a story; it may be enough to simply provide the required information. Deciding which aspects of the framework will be used, and the degree to which each will be prioritized in the final structure, is up to each IA agent for each operation. This is where the science of the research intersects with the art of Influence Activities.

Second, due to the context of counterinsurgency operations, certain aspects of the framework are likely to emerge as consistently more useful or appropriate to this kind of messaging than others. The SUCCESs framework of Simple-Unexpected-Concrete-Credible-Emotional-Stories can also be thought of as Memorable (Simple)―Noticeable (Unexpected)―Understandable (Concrete)―Believable (Credible)―Personal (Emotional)―Actionable (Stories). Seen in this way, and through the context of IA, these aspects take on differing relative weights. Any military operation undertaken in a given area will have a natural Personal/Emotional element that may not need specific emphasis. Additionally, as a military operation progresses, and local nationals are subjected to increasing numbers of messages, using a story to provide context to a future operation may be less appropriate than employing a simple analogy for comparison to a previous successful operation. It is incumbent to remember that the audience is not stupid, and that each audience will be different in their experiences and expectations than another. Therefore, the

SUCCESs framework should be adapted accordingly. Nonetheless, of these six criteria, two emerge as consistently significant. Regardless of the relative necessity of unexpectedness, or the usefulness of a story, or the appropriateness of an emotional element, all messages will need to be understood (Concrete) and believable (Credible).

Heath and Heath argue that we believe ideas "because our parents or our friends believe. We believe because we've had experiences that led us to our beliefs. We believe because of our religious faith. We believe because we trust authorities."[26] As foreign military forces, ISAF/NATO troops are not the 'friends' of Afghan locals, at least in the sense intended here. They are not family members, and they do not represent a specific religious faith. Therefore, the credibility of ISAF/NATO messages rests on the locals' previous experience with foreign soldiers, and with the perception of authority attached to the alliance. Unfortunately, due to the fog and friction of war, equipment malfunction, and even tragic human error, civilian casualties have occurred as the direct result of some ISAF/NATO operations. The experiences, either through rumour or direct encounter, of local nationals with loss of friends and relatives to these infrequent and regrettable events has eroded the needed credibility that comes from authority; as well as directly impacting the credibility attached to the far more common, positive results from previous experiences.

Therefore, ISAF and NATO IA soldiers cannot simply rely on the authority of their position to establish the credibility of their messages; a new authority figure must be found. One option is to transfer the responsibility for the authority of the message to a member of the target audience, such as a Key Leader, or other notable local. This can be achieved when a member of the target audience can be directed towards the conclusion desired by the messages, but be seen to reach the conclusion on their own. Like an epiphany, the audience member is induced to reach the desired conclusion with open ended or rhetorical questions by the IA soldier.[27] The intention is to use these types of questions to insert ideas into the minds of the target that will compete with the ideas they already hold. This process is used to induce cognitive dissonance.[28] The questions should be structured so they contain the desired resolution to that dissonance in their wording. For example, asking someone if they agree with statement 'X,' when it is known that the target neither agrees with, nor disagrees with the idea, inserts an idea that will not be readily rejected (they do not readily disagree) but will compete with their currently held ideas (they do not readily agree). The statement which they could agree with is the potential resolution to the induced dissonance.

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[26] Heath and Heath, *Made*, pp. 132-133.

[27] This approach is likely to be unnecessary and inappropriate when the message is concerned with simply imparting information, but can be very effective when a change of opinion is the desired outcome.

[28] Leon Festinger's 1957 theory of cognitive dissonance states that, "(a) dissonance is produced when two cognitions are psychologically inconsistent with each other, (b) the experience of dissonance is uncomfortable, and (c) the person experiencing dissonance attempts to reduce it and achieve consonance. Dissonance may be reduced in a number of ways (a) changing one's beliefs, (b) avoiding persons producing dissonance, (c) finding further validation of beliefs from those most likely to hold similar beliefs, and (d) rejecting the source of dissonance. See Philip Worchel, and Betty L. McCormick, "Self-Concept and Dissonance Reduction," *Journal of Personality*, Vol. 31, No. 4, 1963, p.588. See also Franklyn W. Dunford and Phillip R. Kunz, "The Neutralization of Religious Dissonance," *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Fall 1973, p. 2.

As a crude but Concrete example, imagine telling a devout Muslim that you had "read some of the Koran and noticed that much of what the Taliban has done to local Afghans seems to be contrary to what the Prophet, Peace be upon Him, tells Muslims to do. Have you misunderstood the Koran?" The language is "soft," it does not state that everything the Taliban has done is wrong, because the target may not believe that *everything* they have done is wrong; strong language and blanket statements should be avoided. The idea that you have 'read some of the Koran' is both *Unexpected* and is more soft language that the target can neither agree nor disagree with. That the Taliban are acting against the Koran is the competing idea meant to induce dissonance. That the target is a devout Muslim and would want to act according to the Koran, and by extension, *not* act as someone who acts against the Koran, and therefore not act like the Taliban, is the implicit resolution.

This approach is considerably different than simply telling someone that if they act like the Taliban, then they are acting contrary to the Koran. A statement like this would require immense credibility attached to the source of this message; more credibility than NATO or ISAF will ever likely have in Afghanistan. Instead the desired conclusion is put before the target audience member, for *them* to reach. It has been found that people who come to their own conclusions about a matter of opinion or personal judgment often preclude a re-examination of how they came to that conclusion. In short, people do not often question how they came to believe something if they think that belief is right. This is the psychological context IA practitioners should attempt when looking to shift authority for an idea to another source.[29]

Admittedly, this type of approach requires some finesse, and novice IA soldiers may not feel confident in using it. In such cases, there is another option. Creating a "falsifiable claim" that the audience can test for themselves is another means of shifting credibility away from the IA soldier. A falsifiable claim can also be thought of as a "see-for-yourself" hypothesis. For example, in March of 2007, a combined allied force led by the British wanted to push the Taliban out of the Sangin Valley in RC South, and they had 5500 NATO troops to do it. The problem was that the Sangin Valley had approximately 14000 fighting aged males living there at the time. The Taliban knew that if they could motivate these men to fight, NATO would be in for a fight they could not win. The Taliban elected to tell the males of Sangin that NATO was coming to destroy their poppy crops, the only source of income for most of these men. This idea gained traction and the threat of these men mobilizing against NATO increased. The IA officers in RC South realized that they were going to have a difficult time convincing this population that their intentions in the valley had nothing to do with poppy crops, so they established a falsifiable claim to compete with the credibility of the Taliban.

In an earlier operation around the town of Babaji, another area reliant on poppy crops for their economy, Afghan National Army and NATO forces had gone in and cleared the Taliban out without destroying the poppy crops. The IA officers quickly put together a handbill detailing that NATO troops were not after the poppy crops of local Afghans, *and if they did not believe NATO, they could go to Babaji and see for themselves.* They could talk to friends and relatives living in or near Babaji and ask them if NATO soldiers had destroyed their crops. This action shifted the authority for credibility to the people of Babaji, removing NATO from the equation entirely. This

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[29] This same tactic has been used successfully by marketing strategists for years. See Heath and Heath, *Made*, pp. 155-157 for an example.

approach was a huge success; when the allied soldiers entered the Sangin Valley, the locals did not mobilize against them, and the Taliban where pushed out of the area.[30]

The credibility of a message is not in question when it comes to the use of firepower by ISAF/NATO. The experience of local Afghans in witnessing allied airpower or artillery is unquestionable. Therefore, for messages concerning proximate operations to enter an area in force, establishing credibility may be of a lesser concern. Conversely, where IA messages are directed at influencing attitudes, perceptions, or behaviours, credibility is a critical, central component of messaging. Where the needed credibility may be lacking, open-ended and rhetorical questions, or falsifiable claims, may provide the necessary means to outmanoeuvre this obstacle.

Finally, these two approaches may be combined to create a reliable, credible voice for subsequent messaging operations. Radio RANA produced a PSA designed to inform the target audience of where to go for vital assistance, such as emergency health care, reporting IEDs, and other insurgent activity.

> Man #1 - *Hey, I found an IED. What's the phone number you call to report it?*
>
> Man #2 - 0700377591
>
> #1 - *Thanks....(writes down number)...wait...what's the number to call if you want emergency health care?*
>
> #2 - 0700377591
>
> #1 - *Isn't that the same number?*
>
> #2 - Yes, I guess it is.
>
> #1 - *Well what number do I call if I want to report insurgent activity?*
>
> #2 - 0700377591
>
> #1 - *Good. Let me write that down.*
>
> #2 - You don't need to write it down.
>
> #1 - *Why?*
>
> #2 - Because it's the same as the last number I gave you.
>
> #1 - *Now I'm confused. What you're telling me is that if I want to report an IED, insurgent activity, or if I need emergency health care, I just need one phone number?*
>
> #2 - That's right.
>
> #1 - *Wow, that's great! ....what was that number again?*
>
> #2 - (makes frustrated sound) 0700377591

This radio spot provides the number necessary to call in these situations. As such, it is a

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[30] Special thanks to Major Jim Dewar for providing this example from his operational experience.

falsifiable claim; similar in concept to that used in the Sangin Valley. Locals can call the number to test for themselves whether it works, and provides the assistance it claims it will. If the two men used to voice this PSA are developed into a recognizable pair of characters, used repeatedly for future PSAs of this kind, then the credibility of the message will be transferred to them. Recognizing their voices, and associating them with previous credible messages shifts the burden of credibility away from the military, and onto these "trusted sources." In essence, this is no different than creating a trusted "brand recognition" for a product in the field of marketing.

2.5   SUCCESs: Emotional

When messaging is taking place in a war zone, the local population will have a natural inclination to care about the messages as they are directly affected by them. However, even in this context, there may be messages that do not gain this automatic buy-in. In this situation an emotive connection may be built between the interests of the people and the goals of the message. Heath and Heath note that the, "most basic way to make people care is to form an association between something they don't care about and something they do care about"[31] and that this is commonly done using ideas in, "a sort of piggybacking strategy, associating themselves with emotions that already exist."[32] If we apply this approach to the example from the Sangin Valley above, we see that the Taliban attempted to do the same thing. The locals in the valley did not feel strongly for or opposed to the presence of ISAF/NATO soldiers in their valley, but the Taliban did. The Taliban knew that the locals cared very strongly about their crops and their ability to feed their families, and so built a connection between these emotions and the perceptions they wanted the locals to have of the soldiers. In turn, Radio RANA did the same thing with their PSA regarding protecting local women by protecting the security forces and reporting the actions of the "enemies of peace."

Concerning this piggybacking strategy, Heath and Heath acknowledge another acronym—WIIFY —"what's in it for you."[33] They argue that WIIFY should be a central component of every IA message, as this is the means of connecting a message to an emotional response. For the people of the Sangin Valley, the WIIFY was protecting the livelihood of their families. For the PSA, the WIIFY was protecting the integrity and innocence of local women. While WIIFY is a powerful and simple motivator, three factors must be considered when employing this technique.

First, it is a common mistake to assume that it is the magnitude of the perceived benefits to the audience member, when it is the *tangibility* of those benefits, which cause an idea to stick.[34] Consider the issue of *Concreteness* in messaging, as explored above. Abstract ideas are vague and "unreal;" they are difficult to "attach" understanding to. The same is true in WIIFY; the more concrete the benefits appear to be, the more likely the target will *be able* to desire them. Messages concerning the "Whole of Government Approach" may resonate with Allied governments, but this is an abstract, and therefore in practical terms, meaningless idea to Afghan locals. Whereas

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[31] Heath and Heath, *Made*, p. 173.
[32] Ibid., p. 171.
[33] Ibid., p. 179.
[34] Heath and Heath, *Made*, p. 182.

building a hospital, staffed by trained professionals, in the middle of their town is much more "real."[35]

Second, when preparing a WIIFY strategy, Heath and Heath have noted that different approaches are necessary depending on what the benefit is. Where the given benefit is "significant, tangible, and immediate," "self-interest does seem to matter, quite a bit."[36] However, "group interest" is often a better predictor *of political opinions* than self-interest."[37] The link between these two levels of analysis is that self-interest may also be defined by "[consulting] an ideal self-image" and asking, "what would someone *like me* do?"[38] This observation is supported by Robert Pape's 2005 study of suicide terrorism[39].

Previous to Pape's work, the common convention was that ranks of suicide bombers were filled with the desperately poor, and otherwise dispossessed. Pape's study turned that impression on its head. He found that most suicide terrorists were from middle class backgrounds, and that the majority of these attackers had attended either university or some other type of post-secondary institution. Pape found that their primary motivation for these attacks was actually altruistic. The bombers believed that by detonating themselves, the impact of their actions would cause positive change for the lives of those they left behind. They were not acting out of desperation, but out of altruism for the group.

This brings us to the third factor influencing WIIFY strategies. In 1943, psychologist Abraham Maslow introduced his "Hierarchy of Needs," a pyramid shaped framework that supported his theory of human motivation. Maslow's pyramid consisted of eight levels, with the most basic human needs at the lowest, widest level. This first level was physical needs; the most basic elements of survival such as hunger, thirst, and bodily comfort. Next up from the bottom is security; safety, protection, and stability. Third was belonging, which comprises feelings of love, family, friends, and affection. Fourth is the internal need for esteem; achievement, competence, approval of others, independence, and status. The fifth level is educational needs, which encompass learning, knowing, and understanding the world around us. Sixth, is the need for aesthetics, whether in symmetry, order, beauty, or balance. The seventh level is self-actualization, wherein individuals realize their own potential and self-fulfillment. Finally, at the top is transcendence, where the need to help others realize their potential is felt.[40]

Originally, it was believed that people had to satisfy the basic needs first, before they would move on to the subsequent levels. However, later experiments found that individuals will pursue all of these levels simultaneously. The significance of this for IA is that WIIFY messages do not have

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[35] This is not to imply that building hospitals in every Afghan village will win the war. Obviously this author recognizes that the situation is far more complex than that. This example is given simply to demonstrate the principle of tangibility.

[36] Heath and Heath, *Made*, p. 189.

[37] Ibid. Italics added.

[38] Ibid., p. 190.

[39] See Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005).

[40] This version of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is taken from Heath and Heath, *Made*, p. 183. There are many versions of the pyramid, even where some of the levels have been collapsed into each other. The Heath and Heath version with eight separate steps is most illustrative for the purposes of this Contract Report.

to concern themselves only with the base two or three levels of Maslow's pyramid. IA soldiers should expand out of "Maslow's basement" and go into the "attic" to craft WIIFY messages that address more esoteric needs. It is interesting to note that the altruism that drove the suicide bombers in Pape's study is a characteristic of transcendence. When IA messages are looking to piggyback on existing needs, their approach needs to be as expansive and comprehensive as possible in the motivations they seek to address.

2.6   SUCCESs: Stories

Of the various aspects of Heath and Heath's SUCCESs framework, the "Stories" criteria is perhaps the least useful to contemporary IA practitioners. However, this is not to discount its role entirely. In most messaging, retaining the audience's attention will be one of the greatest limiting factors in how a message will be presented. Whether the audience is anticipating a message from the agent, or simply preoccupied with the goings-on of their own lives, many audience members may not have neither the patience or the time to listen to a message in the form of a detailed story. Therefore, "stories," for the purposes of this paper, should *not only* be thought of in the traditional sense of a narrative with a protagonist, antagonist, struggle, climax, and resolution, but more as an additional tool in uniting and strengthening the cooperative use of the previous five criteria. The use of stories in the form of analogies forces the message into concrete, relatable terms, with an emotional connection to the prior experiences of the audience. By relating a current message to an analogous "story," the current message can remain simple while drawing on the complexities inherent in the previous experience. These and other themes relating to the use of stories in IA will be explored in the section below.

Heath and Heath tell us that "a *credible* idea makes people believe. An *emotional* idea makes people care" and the right story makes people act.[41] This statement may be directly applicable for the marketing audiences Heath and Heath are writing for, but it needs further consideration to be effective for IA. It is not that the story has to *motivate* the audience to act, through dramatic storytelling; it is that the use of a story brings the audience into an active role as they mentally simulate[42] the story as it unfolds. Being a 'participant' in the story opens the audience members' minds to the messages contained therein. This is why fables work as instructional tools for social controls, norms, and wisdom.[43]

Furthermore, fables are not the only effective use of *Stories* to spread messages. In one of the earliest examples of modern IA, the Canadian Forces as part of the United Nations Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia, produced a weekly paper titled *Mostovi*. *Mostovi* contained a number of articles emphasizing the many benefits offered by the multinational peacekeeping force to local nationals, such as reconstruction projects and free health clinics. It also provided a sports section, a weekly horoscope, information on telephone help lines, pet care, recipes, and other human interest stories. The IA message was clear, "Look at all of the benefits of maintaining the peace of the Dayton accords," yet it was presented as a series of *Stories* designed to appeal to as broad an audience as possible.[44]

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[41] Heath and Heath, *Made*, p. 206.
[42] Ibid., p. 213.
[43] Ibid., pp. 208-210. Recall the example of "The Man and the Bug" from *Sada-e Azadi* discussed in the *Simple* section above.
[44] See, for example, Unattributed, *Mostovi,* Stabilization Force, Bosnia, 12-19 September 1998, No 114e.

According to Heath and Heath, A story is powerful because it provides the context missing from abstract prose."[45] The context is useful because it "provides the additional hooks necessary to make the idea stick; hooks such as emotional, historical background, and provides a meta-level moral."[46] This is the most appropriate use of stories in IA; where stories are used to unite the various aspects of the SUCCESs framework and pull everything together into one message. The "meta-level moral" *is* the commander's intent which defines a simple message. Therefore, when designing a "story" for use in IA messaging, the common theme running through the tale must be the *Simple* message discussed at the beginning of this framework. Analogies provide the *Concrete* experience, the relatable *Emotional* experience, and the historical background, which brings with it the associated truthfulness (*Credibility*) of the previous experience. The *Unexpectedness* element will come from the analogy the IA agent chooses to use. In combination, the use of a story *demonstrates* the ideas the agent wants to convey, rather than simply providing those ideas as information[47].

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[45] Heath and Heath, *Made*, p. 214.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid., p. 217.

3   Conclusion

No matter how effective a framework for developing messages may be, they need to resonate and interact with the mental schemas of the audience. A schema is the sum of the experiences an individual has of their life, or specific aspects of their life.[48] It defines a person's perception of their world and is the basis that new information is compared to. For example, you may have a schema about a particular kind of food, such as Italian food. Your schema of "Italian food" may be different from mine, but unless you have had Chinese food that someone told you was Italian, or suffer from some specific psychological disorder that causes you to mislabel experiences in your memory, chances are that your schema of "Italian food" and mine will overlap considerably. Based on your schema for Italian food, when someone offers you an Italian-styled dish at dinner you may happily accept or warily reject the food. If you eat it, you will automatically compare it, as new information related to your prior experiences, to your pre-existing schema. This is done to help you interpret the new information/food. Is it similar to other Italian food you have experienced? In what ways? Is it better, worse, or the same? What preconceived notions did you have about Italian food before tasting this new meal? Was the experience of this new meal *Unexpected*?

These questions naturally flow from the comparison of new experiences to the schemas we have had, and expect to have, relative to those new experiences. If we change the example from "Italian food" to the experiences that Afghan locals have had of NATO, ISAF, and/or Canadian Forces soldiers, then we can begin to develop the empathy necessary for effectively predicting the schemas of the target audience. This is also where the intelligence gathered from Target Audience Analyses and Human Terrain Teams will inform your messages. This information will help you discern which aspects of the SUCCESs framework should be most emphasized in a particular message.

Concerning empathy, it is *not important* to be able to predict what the target audience thinks, about all things in all cases, with one hundred percent accuracy. What is important is appreciating the difference between your schema, as it relates to the message, and their schema as it relates to receiving the message. Heath and Heath call this gap the "Curse of Knowledge." The curse of knowledge occurs when one person knows something so well, they forget what it is like not to know anything about that subject. For example, an IA soldier knows what the message is, what its intent is, and how it relates to the larger efforts of psychological operations in theatre. The audience member does not know any of this. Due to the level of knowledge possessed by the soldier, they will likely find it difficult *not* bring their own assumptions to the message. These assumptions, if unaccounted for, will interfere with how the message is structured and delivered. The soldier must find a way to empathize with the level of knowledge of the target and adapt their message and delivery accordingly.

Heath and Heath recommend that to overcome the curse of knowledge, relentlessly ask yourself "Why?" until you move beyond what you want to say, to why the listener should want to hear it. This is the key to establishing the critical element of empathy. "Asking 'Why?' helps to remind us of the core values [the commander's intent], the core principles, which underlie our ideas."[49]

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[48] For a more in-depth discussion of schemas, see Heath and Heath, *Made*, pp. 53-62.
[49] Heath and Heath, *Made*, p. 201.

This process can be practiced before deployment in your spare time. Take any process you are familiar with, such as changing the oil in your car, executing a perfect Dead-lift in the gym, or shooting a basketball for a three-point shot, then teach this process to a friend who does not have the same level of expertise you enjoy. The larger the difference between your abilities and theirs, the more dramatic the results will be. First, explain to your target how to do what you want done, but do not show them. When messaging, the effectiveness of your message will depend most on your communication skills. Then, set your target to carrying out what you have explained. Were they as successful as you were? If so, find a new activity and repeat; after all, you may have gotten lucky. If not, identify where they went wrong. Did you assume they would know where the oil pan was, or where to position their hands on the basketball? What did you fail to explain to them? Did you explain too much, and they got lost in the sea of new information? Only by teaching something can you identify those things you incorrectly assume your audience will know. Learning to do this is how you overcome the curse of knowledge and better tailor your messages to the target audience.

One final point, even where the curse of knowledge has been successfully overcome, and the message structured for maximum cognitive retention, the choice of language used may derail the intent of the message. One powerful presumption often brought to messaging is the assumption that a chosen word will have the same meaning for the messenger as for the audience. In his study of religious perceptions, Scott Bidstrup examined the intentional dual use of language to alter meaning, and therefore perception. He identified this practice as "verbicide," which involves "quite literally, distorting, even destroying the meaning of words so that they have a different meaning to the believer than the nonbeliever."[50] He includes several real examples of verbicide in his analysis, each with distinct and significant definitional differences. For example, "righteousness" can mean "being converted and living according to the doctrines," "justice" may be defined as "punishment dealt out to the unconverted," "liberty" can be described as "feeling of freedom from the effects of sin," "bondage" has been identified with "being controlled by Satan," "a feeling of connection with God" was labeled as "love," "hate" meant "not being tolerant of unbelief," and "will" was defined as not wishing "to do anything contrary to the will of God."[51] Since the key to IA messaging is the transmission of the *meaning* of the message, understanding how the audience can interpret that message is of paramount importance.

This Contract Report has explored several considerations that must be taken into account to improve IA messaging in a military context. However, this exercise is not intended to lay out a step-by-step checklist, or "how to," for effective messaging. IA is not a science so much as an art, and much of how and whether this framework will apply is up to the discretion of the IA soldier on the ground. The SUCCESs framework provided by Heath and Heath is meant as a set of guidelines, a departure point, for structuring messages to achieve maximum retention in the minds of the audience. Regardless of how messages are structured, the curse of knowledge will remain an intrusive factor, the relation of new information to existing schemas will remain the means for how people interpret their surroundings, and empathy for the target will remain the key to unlocking access between the audience receiving the intended message sent by the messenger. Hopefully, by considering each of the elements of persuasion and messaging discussed above, the

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[50] Scott Bidstrup, "The Mind Virus: Ideas Behaving in Society like Viruses in the Body," Accessed 25 June 2008 at http://www.bidstrup.com/virus.htm, p. 5.
[51] Bidstrup, "Mind," p. 5.

initial steps have been taken to redressing the current weaknesses in at least one aspect of Influence Activities.

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Document No.: DRDC CORA CR 2011-004

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DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA

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1.	ORIGINATOR (The name and address of the organization preparing the document. Organizations for whom the document was prepared, e.g. Centre sponsoring a contractor's report, or tasking agency, are entered in section 8.) Andrew Sullivan Royal Military College of Canada PO Box 17000 Stn Forces Kingston Ontario K7K 7B4		2.	SECURITY CLASSIFICATION (Overall security classification of the document including special warning terms if applicable.) UNCLASSIFIED

3.	TITLE (The complete document title as indicated on the title page. Its classification should be indicated by the appropriate abbreviation (S, C or U) in parentheses after the title.) Some Considerations in Developing Effective Messaging: The "SUCCESs" Framework and Military Influence Activities

4.	AUTHORS (last name, followed by initials – ranks, titles, etc. not to be used) Andrew Sullivan

5.	DATE OF PUBLICATION (Month and year of publication of document.) January 2011	6a. NO. OF PAGES (Total containing information, including Annexes, Appendices, etc.) 35	6b. NO. OF REFS (Total cited in document.) 51

7.	DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (The category of the document, e.g. technical report, technical note or memorandum. If appropriate, enter the type of report, e.g. interim, progress, summary, annual or final. Give the inclusive dates when a specific reporting period is covered.) Contract Report

8.	SPONSORING ACTIVITY (The name of the department project office or laboratory sponsoring the research and development – include address.) Defence R&D Canada – CORA 101 Colonel By Drive Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K2

9a.	PROJECT OR GRANT NO. (If appropriate, the applicable research and development project or grant number under which the document was written. Please specify whether project or grant.) RMCC Serial #2009-0302-SLA-PR10023	9b. CONTRACT NO. (If appropriate, the applicable number under which the document was written.)

10a.	ORIGINATOR'S DOCUMENT NUMBER (The official document number by which the document is identified by the originating activity. This number must be unique to this document.) Service-Level Agreement with RMC 2009-0302-SLA-PR10023	10b. OTHER DOCUMENT NO(s). (Any other numbers which may be assigned this document either by the originator or by the sponsor.) DRDC CORA CR 2011-004

11.	DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY (Any limitations on further dissemination of the document, other than those imposed by security classification.) Unlimited

12.	DOCUMENT ANNOUNCEMENT (Any limitation to the bibliographic announcement of this document. This will normally correspond to the Document Availability (11). However, where further distribution (beyond the audience specified in (11) is possible, a wider announcement audience may be selected.)) Unlimited

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This Contract Report is intended to provide some applied methods to support the training of information operations (Info Ops) and psychological operations (PsyOps) personnel. It is meant to accompany a similarly titled presentation developed for the Peace Support Training Centre at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Kingston. While there are limitations to the framework suggested here, it can at least serve as a starting point for the improvement of training material provided students at CF schools. This field emphasizes messaging and how messages target audiences to remember a product, and act upon that memory in a desirable fashion. Although this approach does not pretend to solve all of the theoretical weaknesses in current Influence Activities (IA) related doctrine and training, it does provide a departure point for improving messaging in this area. The consumer psychology literature is both broad and well-established. It should be noted that the fundamentals of the framework are not entirely original. In fact, much of the material reflects previous longstanding work in other fields of research, including the voluminous body of literature on propaganda. However, the simplicity of the framework described below is ideally suited to the short instructional timeframes available in current CF training courses. This Contract Report will explore a newly proposed framework for effective messaging in consumer psychology, adapt it to be suitable to an IA perspective, and apply it through the use of examples drawn from operational experiences in Afghanistan and Bosnia.

Le présent rapport de contrat vise à fournir quelques méthodes appliquées pour appuyer la formation du personnel des opérations d'information (OI) et des opérations psychologiques (OPSPSY) et à accompagner une présentation du même titre qui a été créée pour le Centre de formation pour le soutien de la paix de la base des Forces canadiennes (BFC) de Kingston. Bien que le cadre de travail suggéré soit limité, il peut au moins servir de point de départ pour améliorer les documents de formation distribués aux stagiaires dans les écoles des FC. Ce domaine de recherche met l'accent sur les messages et la façon dont ils ciblent des auditoires pour qu'ils se souviennent d'un produit et dont ils agissent sur cette mémoire de la façon voulue. Bien que cette approche ne prétende pas résoudre toutes les lacunes théoriques de la doctrine et de la formation actuelles sur les activités d'influence (AI), elle offre un point de départ pour améliorer les messages dans ce domaine. La documentation sur la psychologie du consommateur est à la fois vaste et bien établie. Il faut prendre note que les fondements du cadre de travail ne sont pas tout à fait originaux. En effet, la plus grande partie du document tient compte d'anciens travaux effectués dans d'autres domaines de recherche, y compris la documentation importante sur la propagande. Toutefois, la simplicité du cadre de travail décrit ci-dessous convient parfaitement aux périodes d'enseignement très courtes des cours de formation actuels des FC. Le présent document explorera un nouveau cadre de travail proposé pour l'envoi de messages efficaces en psychologie du consommateur, l'adaptera afin qu'il corresponde à la perspective des AI et l'appliquera de façon pratique à travers des exemples tirés d'expériences opérationnelles en Afghanistan et en Bosnie.

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Influence Activities; Info Ops; PsyOps; Psychological Operations; Messaging; Messages;

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